

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LEA AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER NCLB

FACT SHEET

NCLB REQUIRES LEAS TO REVIEW ANNUALLY THE STATUS OF EVERY SCHOOL, IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE SCHOOL IS MAKING ADEQUATE PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING THE LONG-TERM PROFICIENCY GOAL.

INTRODUCTION

Research indicates and educators know that high-performing schools are complex institutions. At their core is a focus on academics and an unwavering expectation that all children can and will achieve academic proficiency. Surrounding this center are a dedicated staff with a sense of common purpose, strong instructional leadership from the principal, the confidence and respect of parents, and an allocation of resources that supports the school's mission. In high-performing schools, all members of the school community, both individually and collectively, hold themselves accountable for student success.

In addition to detailing school accountability measures and consequences, NCLB focuses increased attention on the performance of LEAs, emphasizing their unique and important leadership role in school improvement.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF SCHOOL PROGRESS

1. Why do the SEA and LEA conduct an annual review of school progress?

The SEA and LEA use the annual review of school progress primarily to determine (1) if a school has made adequate progress toward all students meeting or exceeding the State's student academic achievement standards by 2013-14, and (2) if a school has narrowed the achievement gap. The results of the annual review also provide the SEA and LEA with detailed, useful information that they can use to develop or refine technical assistance strategies they employ with schools.

2. What data do SEAs and LEAs review?

In conjunction with the LEA, the SEA also reviews the effectiveness of each school's actions and activities that are supported by Title I Part A funds, including parental involvement and professional development.

3. What is the timeline for the review of school progress?

The SEA, in conjunction with the LEA, must conduct its review of school progress annually, in the period of time between the release of student results on the State academic assessments and the start of the school year following the administration of the assessments.

4. What entity must ensure that this timeline is met?

The SEA is responsible for ensuring that the results of academic assessments administered as part of the State assessment system in a given school year are available in sufficient time for LEAs to review them and for school-level determinations of AYP to be made.

5. Should officials in individual schools examine the data that the SEA and LEA review?

Yes. Examining and analyzing the results of assessments and other data that the SEA and LEA use in their review are effective strategies for continuous school improvement. Analyzing results from the State assessment system and other relevant data is so important, in fact, that LEAs are required to provide this assistance to schools identified as in need of improvement.

6. How must the LEA share the results of a school's annual review?

An LEA must publicize and disseminate the results of the annual progress review of its schools to principals, teachers, parents, and the community. Whether or not their schools make AYP, principals and teachers can use these results to refine and improve their instructional program to help all children meet challenging academic achievement and performance standards. The results also provide parents and community members with a factual basis for judging the quality of their school and alert them to opportunities for increased involvement. Required LEA and school report cards provide one vehicle for LEAs to publicize the results of the annual reviews.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

SEAs and LEAs are required to intervene in schools that persistently do not meet these targets: “School Improvement”, “Corrective Action”, and “Restructuring”. The school improvement process and timeline are designed to create a sense of urgency about reform and to focus identified schools on quickly and efficiently improving student outcomes.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT – YEAR ONE

1. What purpose is served by identifying a school for improvement?

Identifying a school for improvement serves as a formal acknowledgement that the school is not meeting the challenge of successfully teaching all of its children. The SEA and LEA will provide a school that is identified for improvement with extensive support and technical assistance in designing and implementing a plan to improve student achievement.

2. May a school appeal the SEA’s determination that the school has not made AYP for two consecutive years?

Yes. With rare exceptions, only statistical errors in the underlying data would provide cause for a reconsideration of the school’s status.

3. When the LEA identifies a school for improvement, what information must it provide to parents?

When one of its schools is identified for improvement, the LEA must promptly provide the following information to the parents of each child enrolled in the school:

- an explanation of what the identification means and how the school their child attends compares to other elementary and secondary schools served by the LEA and the SEA in terms of the academic achievement of its students;
- the reason(s) for the school being identified for improvement, such as insufficient participation in assessments or one or more subgroups not meeting academic proficiency targets;
- an explanation of how parents can become involved in addressing the academic issues that led to identification; and,
- an explanation of the parents’ option to transfer their child to another school in the LEA that has not been identified for improvement. The notification must provide parents with enough relevant information to help them decide what school is best for their child and be made well before the beginning of the school year in which this option will be

available, so that if parents choose to do so they have sufficient time to exercise their choice option prior to the beginning of the school year.

At a minimum, the LEA must inform parents about the academic achievement level of students at the school or schools to which their child may transfer, but it may also choose to include other information, such as a description of special academic programs, facilities, before-or-after school programs, the professional qualifications of teachers in the core academic subjects, or parent involvement opportunities. The LEA must also explain to parents that it will provide their child with transportation to the schools that the LEA identifies as options, subject to certain cost limitations.

4. What information must the LEA provide to both parents and the public?

In addition to providing school improvement information to the parents of each student in the school, the LEA must publish and disseminate, to both parents and the public, information explaining –

- what the school is doing to address the problem of low achievement; and
- what the LEA or the SEA is doing to help the school address this problem.

5. What guidelines should SEAs, LEAs, or schools follow when communicating with parents and the public during the school improvement process?

Meaningful parental involvement is one of the cornerstones of the reform initiatives contained in the No Child Left Behind Act. Therefore, it is essential that SEAs, LEAs, or schools communicate with parents throughout the school improvement process and welcome them as key partners in addressing the academic issues that led to the school being identified for improvement.

Clarity and timeliness of information are essential. The State, LEA, or school must ensure that required information is provided in an understandable and uniform format (including alternative formats upon request), regardless of the method or media used. To the extent practicable, written communication must be in a language parents can understand, with special attention given to parents of migratory and limited English proficient students. If that is not practicable, the information must be provided in oral translations for parents with limited English proficiency.

The LEA, or school must provide information to parents directly, through regular mail or by e-mail. However, if an SEA does not have access to individual student addresses, it may distribute information through the LEA or school. The same information must also be disseminated through broader means of communication, such as the Internet, the media, and

through public agencies serving students and their families.

6. What are the responsibilities of the LEA after a school is identified for improvement?

When one of its schools is identified for its first year of school improvement, the LEA must:

- ensure that public school choice is provided for children whose parents wish to transfer them from the school identified for improvement; and
- ensure that the identified school receives technical assistance, both during the development or revision of its school improvement plan and throughout the plan's implementation.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

1. What must the school do when it is identified for improvement?

The process of school improvement begins with the school developing a required two-year plan that addresses the academic issues that caused it to be identified for school improvement. The school may develop a new plan or revise an existing one, but in either case it must be completed no later than three months after the school has been identified.

2. What is the purpose of the school improvement plan?

The purpose of the school improvement plan is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school, so that greater numbers of students achieve proficiency in the core academic subjects of reading and mathematics. The school improvement plan provides a framework for analyzing problems and addressing instructional issues in a school that has not made sufficient progress in student achievement.

3. What topics must the plan address?

Together, the components of the school improvement plan should embody a design that is comprehensive, highly structured, specific, and focused primarily on the school's instructional program. Specifically, the plan's design must address:

- core academic subjects and the strategies used to teach them,
- professional development,
- technical assistance,
- parent involvement, and must contain
- measurable goals.

The plan should also specify the implementation responsibilities of the school, the LEA, and the SEA serving the school.

4. How must the plan address the school's core academic subjects and instructional strategies?

The school improvement plan must demonstrate that the school will implement policies and practices grounded in scientifically based research that are most likely to bring all groups of students to proficiency in reading and mathematics. Included among these strategies, as appropriate, would be additional learning activities for students that take place before school, after school, during the summer, and during any extension of the school year.

For schools in need of improvement, scientifically based research provides a standard by which the principal and teachers can critically evaluate the many instructional strategies and programs that are available to them and choose those with the greatest likelihood of producing positive results.

5. What are examples of instructional strategies grounded in scientifically based research?

Strategies grounded in scientifically based research are those that have demonstrated, over time and in varied settings, an effectiveness that is documented by high-quality educational research. High-quality scientifically based research employs an experimental or quasi-experimental design and produces replicable results, confirmed by peer review, that can be applied to the general population. For example, scientifically based research has shown that explicit instruction in (1) phonemic awareness, (2) phonics, (3) vocabulary development, (4) reading fluency, and (5) reading comprehension is effective in teaching reading to students in grades K-3. Strategies that apply this research in a classroom setting would be grounded in scientifically based research.

6. What are examples of policies and practices with the greatest likelihood of ensuring that all groups of students achieve proficiency?

Policies and practices with the greatest likelihood of ensuring that all students achieve proficiency are those that affect the school's teaching and learning program, both directly and indirectly. Policies and practices that have an impact on classrooms include those that build school infrastructures, such as regular data analysis, the involvement of teachers and parents in decision-making, and the allocation of resources to support core goals. Other policies and practices that have a more direct effect on student achievement include the choice of instructional programs and materials, the use of instructional time, and improved use of assessment results. Decisions about the specific policies and practices to be implemented should be based on a thoughtful review and analysis of the individual school's needs.

7. Can a school identified for improvement implement a comprehensive school reform model as a part of its school improvement plan?

The ESEA specifically states that a school can implement a comprehensive school reform model as a part of its improvement plan. However, a model alone cannot address all of the identified needs of a school and cannot substitute for a coherent plan for systemic change. It must be viewed as one strategy in a school's comprehensive plan for improvement.

8. Why must the plan address professional development?

Although by the end of the 2005-06 school year all teachers must be highly qualified, ongoing professional development is crucial to ensure their continuous improvement in the instructional skills needed to help all students meet or exceed proficiency targets on State academic assessments.

9. What kinds of professional development should be provided?

The professional development component of the school improvement plan should directly address the academic achievement problems that caused the school to be identified. In most cases, this professional training will focus on the teaching and learning process, such as increasing content knowledge, the use of scientifically based instructional strategies, especially in core academic subjects, and the alignment of classroom activities with academic content standards and assessments. Another example of useful professional development would be training teachers to analyze classroom and school-level data and use it to inform their instruction. The professional development detailed in the school improvement plan must be provided in a manner that affords increased opportunity for teachers to participate, and must incorporate teacher mentoring activities or programs.

10. Why must the school improvement plan contain provisions for teacher mentoring?

This requirement reflects statutory and regulatory support not only for recruiting and hiring highly qualified teachers, but for strategies to retain them. High-quality, structured mentoring programs have a positive effect on the retention of qualified teachers.

11. What is the source of funding for the professional development detailed in the school improvement plan?

A school identified for improvement must spend not less than 10 percent of its allocation of Title I Part A funds, for each fiscal year that the school is in improvement, for the purpose of providing high-quality professional development to the school's teachers, principal and, as appropriate, other instructional staff. The school improvement plan must provide an assurance that this expenditure will take place.

12. What is "high-quality" professional development?

"High-quality" professional development is professional development as defined in the reauthorized ESEA. In general, the definition recommends professional development that is sustained and classroom-focused. It must contribute to an increase both in teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects they teach and in their use of effective, scientifically based instructional strategies with a diverse range of students. It must be provided over time and not take the form of one-day or short-term workshops. High-quality professional development is an integral part of effective improvement plans, at both the school and LEA levels.

13. How must the school improvement plan address parental involvement?

The school improvement plan must address parental involvement in two ways. First, it must describe how the school will provide the parents of each student enrolled with written notice about the school's identification for improvement. Second, the plan must specify the strategies that will be used to promote parental involvement. Effective strategies will engage parents as partners with teachers in educating their children and will involve them in meaningful decision-making at the school.

14. Why must a school improvement plan contain measurable goals?

By establishing measurable goals, a school in improvement clearly articulates the purposes and intended outcomes of its improvement plan. In addition, the goals provide a means of tracking the school's progress over the two years of the plan.

It is especially important that in this plan the goals are clear and are tightly focused on the fundamental teaching and learning issues that have prevented the school from making adequate progress. The measurable goals must promote continuous and substantial progress to ensure that students in each subgroup enrolled in the school meet the State's annual measurable objectives.

The ultimate purpose of setting and achieving measurable goals is to improve student academic achievement, remove the identified school from school improvement status, and build its capacity to continue to make adequate yearly progress in the future.

15. If the school identified for improvement has an existing plan, must it create a new plan to meet the school improvement requirements?

No. A school with an existing plan may use the three months after it is identified to review and revise it to ensure that the plan incorporates the required statutory elements. However, for any plan to serve as a useful tool for improvement, it must address identified needs, contain realistic goals and strategies, and reflect the commitment of staff, students, parents, and community to its implementation. If the existing plan has not served as a functional tool for improving student achievement, the school and its students might be better served by beginning the planning process again, assessing needs, and creating a realistic plan that can and will be implemented and has a high likelihood of increasing student achievement.

16. Who must be involved in developing the school improvement plan?

In developing or revising its plan, the school must consult with parents, school staff, the LEA, and outside experts. Ideally these outside experts will serve as technical assistants and partners with the school throughout the plan's implementation.

17. What is the review process for the school improvement plan?

Peer reviewers must consider a proposed plan for school improvement within 45 days of its submission, through a process established by the LEA. The LEA should involve as peer reviewers teachers and administrators from schools or districts similar to the one in improvement, but significantly more successful in meeting the learning needs of their students. Staff with demonstrated effectiveness and recognized expertise in school improvement will be able to evaluate the plan's quality and the likelihood of its successful implementation, and make suggestions for revisions.

18. Under what timeline must the LEA approve the school improvement plan?

Once the peer review of the proposed plan has been completed, the LEA must work with the school to make any necessary revisions and must approve the plan as soon as it satisfactorily meets the requirements detailed in the statute and regulations. It is essential that the school draft the plan, and the LEA revise and approve it, as expeditiously as possible since it provides the blueprint for changes designed to dramatically improve the academic achievement of all students.

19. May the LEA condition its approval of a school improvement plan?

Yes. Once the LEA has conducted a peer review of the proposed school improvement plan, it may approve the plan with conditions it deems necessary to ensure the plan's successful implementation. For instance, the LEA may condition its approval on feedback on the plan from parents and community leaders. The LEA may also choose to approve the plan on the condition that the school undergoes one or more corrective actions. These corrective actions can include implementing a new curriculum with appropriate professional development, significantly decreasing school-level management authority, or changing the internal organization of the school.

20. According to what timeline must the school improvement plan be implemented?

In order to realize improvement as quickly as possible, a school must implement its new or revised school improvement plan as soon as the LEA approves it, preferably during the school year in which the identification was made and no later than the beginning of the school year following its identification for improvement.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT – TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

1. What is the LEA's responsibility for providing technical assistance to a school in improvement?

The LEA bears the primary responsibility for ensuring that the school in improvement receives technical assistance, as it develops or revises its school plan and throughout the plan's implementation. Technical assistance is practical advice offered by an expert source that addresses specific areas for improvement.

The LEA is not required to provide the technical assistance directly, although it may choose to do so. Other acceptable technical assistance providers include the SEA; an institution of higher education; a private, not-for-profit or for-profit organization; an educational service agency; or another entity with experience in helping schools improve academic achievement.

2. In what areas must the LEA assist a school in improvement?

Technical assistance for a school identified for improvement must focus on strengthening and improving the school's instructional program. It must help the school address the issues that caused it to make inadequate progress for two consecutive years. Specifically, the LEA must ensure that the school in need of improvement receives technical assistance based on scientifically based research in three areas:

- Data analysis: the LEA must help the school to analyze results from the State assessment system and other relevant examples of student work. The LEA must teach school staff how to use these data to identify and solve problems in instruction; to strengthen parental involvement and professional development; and to fulfill other responsibilities that are defined in the school improvement plan.
- Identification and implementation of strategies: the LEA must help the school choose effective instructional strategies and methods and ensure that the school staff receives high quality professional development relevant to their implementation. The chosen strategies must be grounded in scientifically based research and address the specific instructional issues that caused the school to be identified for improvement.
- Budget analysis: reallocating resources to support improved student achievement is crucial to the successful implementation of the initiatives contained in the No Child Left Behind Act. The LEA must provide the school in improvement with technical assistance in analyzing and revising its budget to fund activities most likely to increase student achievement and remove it from school improvement status.

In all three of these areas, the LEA has the opportunity to support thoughtful analysis and capacity building at the local level, both of which will not only help schools to improve, but will also help them to sustain their improvements over time.

3. What factors should the LEA take into account as it devises an assistance plan for a school in need of improvement?

Assisting schools in need of improvement creates a major accountability challenge for LEAs. Because of the likelihood that many schools will be identified for improvement under the rigorous accountability provisions contained in the No Child Left Behind Act, LEAs may be tempted to consider formulating a single assistance plan for all of its schools so designated. To the extent feasible, the LEA should avoid taking this approach. Schools in need of improvement are more likely to be in need of individualized assistance comprised of strategies and interventions that recognize and address their unique challenges.

It is crucial that the LEA align its assistance with the school improvement plan being developed by the school. Both the school improvement plan and the LEA assistance plan should be based on a close analysis of the school's demographic and achievement data, such as on subgroup performance, and a comprehensive needs assessment that identifies both strengths and weaknesses. This close analysis will enable the LEA to

target more accurately available resources to address identified deficiencies. The goals, objectives, and action steps that result from the comprehensive analysis must realistically address the school's needs and systematically move it toward improvement. Involving teachers, school administrators, and parents in this planning and decision-making is crucial to its successful design and implementation.

4. What responsibility does the LEA have to assist schools in need of improvement?

The LEA has primary responsibility for assisting its schools that do not make adequate progress toward meeting established student academic achievement targets.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT – YEAR TWO

1. What causes a school to enter year two of school improvement status?

If a school in school improvement status for one school year does not, during the course of that year, make AYP as it is defined by the State accountability system, it must be identified for year two of school improvement status. For example, if a school that implements year one of school improvement during the 2003-04 school year does not make AYP by the end of that year, it must implement year two during the 2004-05 school year.

2. May an LEA delay implementing the second year of school improvement?

An LEA may delay the implementation of year two of school improvement if, after undergoing one year of school improvement, (1) the school makes adequate yearly progress as defined by its State accountability system, or (2) the school does not make AYP due to exceptional or uncontrollable circumstances such as a natural disaster or a precipitous and unforeseen decline in the financial resources of the district or school.

This delay is temporary (it may not exceed one school year), and it is not intended to reset the sequence of school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that is detailed in the statute. The LEA may not take the delay into account in determining the number of years a school has missed its AYP targets and must, after the delay, subject the school to further actions as if the delay never occurred.

3. Must the LEA continue to provide technical assistance during this delay?

Since the school must continue to implement its improvement plan during the delay, and since the LEA is required to provide technical assistance throughout the implementation of the school improvement plan, the LEA must continue to provide technical assistance during the delay period.

4. What notification requirements apply when a school enters its second year of school improvement?

When a school is identified for year two of school improvement, the LEA must promptly notify the parents of each child enrolled in the school of –

- Their option to transfer their child to another, higher-performing public school served by the LEA.
- The availability of supplemental educational services for eligible children. The LEA must provide the names of approved providers of services available within the LEA or within a reasonable distance of that area, along with a brief description of the services, qualifications, and demonstrated effectiveness of these providers. For more detailed information on the provision of supplemental educational services, please see the Department of Education's *Supplemental Educational Services Non-Regulatory Guidance* at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/suppsvcsguid.doc>

5. What assistance is available to a school in its second year of improvement?

During its second year of school improvement, an LEA must ensure that the school continues to receive the technical assistance that was begun in year one; that assistance should be focused specifically on the continued implementation of the school improvement plan. Before year two begins, the school improvement support team will have recommended to the LEA that the team continue to work with the school or will have recommended that some other kind of assistance be provided. The LEA and the SEA share the responsibility for monitoring the quality and appropriateness of the technical assistance that is provided.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF LEA PROGRESS

Because LEAs are the primary conduits for implementing school-level accountability, it is especially important that the SEA monitor their progress, provide them with assistance, and intervene in their operation when necessary. The ESEA and its regulations provide a detailed description of the State's oversight role, which includes monitoring not only progress on

measures of student academic proficiency, but also LEA activities regarding technical assistance, professional development, and parental involvement.

LEA REVIEW PROCESS

1. Does the SEA review LEAs that do not receive Title I Part A funding?

Yes. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the NCLB of 2001, requires that the SEA annually review the progress of all LEAs as a part of the State's single, statewide accountability system.

2. Should an LEA examine the data that the SEA reviews?

Yes. LEAs can and should analyze the data the SEA reviews and apply the findings to the development of improvement strategies. The data provide a consistent set of criteria by which an LEA can assess not only individual schools but also the LEA's overall performance. The findings can be used to shape LEA policies and procedures, especially those that affect curriculum, management, and budget allocation.

3. If, after conducting its review, the SEA proposes to identify an LEA for improvement, must the LEA be given an opportunity to review the data?

Yes. Before identifying an LEA for improvement, the SEA must provide the LEA with an opportunity to review the data on which it has based the proposed identification. If the LEA believes that the proposed identification is in error for statistical or other substantive reasons, the SEA must consider any supporting evidence that the LEA provides to refute the identification. The SEA must make a final determination regarding the identification of the LEA no later than 30 days after the LEA is notified of the pending action.

4. What notification requirements apply during the LEA review and after the results of the review are determined?

Throughout the LEA review process the SEA must communicate with parents, ensuring that it provides information in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request; and to the extent practicable, in a language that parents can understand. The SEA must provide information to the parents of each student enrolled in a school served by the LEA both directly, through regular or e-mail, and indirectly, using the Internet, the media, or public agencies serving the student population and their families. If the SEA does not have access to individual student addresses, it may distribute information through the LEA or schools.

Once the LEA review is completed, the SEA must promptly publicize and disseminate the results to the LEAs, school staffs, the parents of each student enrolled in a school served by the LEA, students, and the community.

5. If, after conducting its review, an SEA determines that an LEA has exceeded its annual AYP objectives for two consecutive years, may it reward the LEA?

Yes. A reward structure for LEAs and schools that make significant progress toward reaching the long-term goal of proficiency in core academic subjects of reading/language arts and mathematics by 2013-14, is an integral part of every State's accountability plan. Toward that end, the SEA may reserve funds to reward LEAs that have met their annual targets for two consecutive years. The SEA may reserve for these rewards up to five percent of the excess allocation it receives; this excess is defined as the positive difference between a State's Title I Part A allocation in one fiscal year and its allocation for the previous fiscal year.

LEA IMPROVEMENT

LEA IMPROVEMENT – YEARS ONE AND TWO

1. Which LEAs must an SEA identify for improvement?

The SEA must identify for improvement any LEA that, for two consecutive years, does not make adequate progress as defined by the State's accountability system.

2. Is it possible for an LEA to be identified for improvement even if none of its schools are so identified?

Yes, it is possible for an LEA to be identified for improvement even if none of its schools is identified. Adequate yearly progress for an LEA is determined by aggregating the results of academic achievement measures in reading/language arts and mathematics, student participation rates in these assessments, graduation rates, and, for elementary and middle schools, rates of progress for at least one other State-determined academic indicator. Tested subgroups that are not large enough to meet the minimum group size at an individual school will, in many cases, reach or surpass that number at the LEA level, and thus be included in the calculation of whether or not the LEA has made adequate progress.

For example, a State may have decided on a minimum group size of 30 for any subgroup included in the accountability system. If an LEA within that SEA has two elementary schools, each of which has 20 limited English proficient (LEP) students, then neither school has enough LEP students for their assessment scores to

be included in the school's accountability determination. However, when aggregated at the LEA level, there are assessment results for 40 LEP students (10 more than the minimum 30). In this case, the LEA would be held accountable for the progress of LEP students as a subgroup.

3. What notification requirements apply if an SEA identifies an LEA for improvement?

If an SEA identifies an LEA for improvement, the SEA must promptly notify the parents of each student enrolled in the schools served by that LEA. In the notification, the SEA must explain the reasons for the identification and how parents can participate in improving the LEA. The SEA must also tell these parents, and the public, what corrective actions it will take to improve the LEA.

The SEA must notify parents of its action in clear and non-technical language, providing information in a uniform format, and in alternative formats upon request. When practicable, SEAs must convey this information to limited English proficient parents in written translations that they can understand. If that is not practicable, the information must be provided in oral translations for these parents. In addition to notifying those directly connected with the LEA, the SEA must broadly disseminate its findings, using means such as the Internet, the news media, and public agencies.

4. If the SEA identifies an LEA for improvement, what actions must the LEA take?

If the SEA identifies an LEA for improvement, the LEA must develop or revise an improvement plan, no later than three months after the identification. In developing or revising this plan, the LEA must consult with parents, school staff, and others.

5. What is the purpose of the LEA improvement plan?

The purpose of the LEA improvement plan is to address the deficiencies in the LEA that prevent students in its schools from achieving proficiency in the core academic subjects of reading and mathematics. Improving the centralized leadership structure of a school district is difficult and complex work. The improvement plan must analyze and address LEA insufficiencies as they relate to leadership for schools, governance and fiscal infrastructures, and curriculum and instruction. The plan-writing process should result in a determination of why the LEA's previous efforts to improve were ineffective and a framework of detailed action steps to improve on those efforts.

6. What components must the LEA improvement plan contain?

The purpose of the LEA plan is to improve student achievement throughout the LEA. Therefore, the plan overall must identify actions that, if implemented, have the greatest likelihood of accomplishing this goal. Specifically, the plan must:

- Address the fundamental teaching and learning needs of schools in the LEA, especially the academic problems of low-achieving students;
- Define specific measurable achievement goals and targets for each of the student subgroups whose disaggregated results are included in the State's definition of AYP;
- Incorporate strategies grounded in scientifically based research that will strengthen instruction in core academic subjects;
- Include, as appropriate, student learning activities before school, after school, during the summer, and during any extension of the school year;
- Provide for high-quality professional development for instructional staff that focuses primarily on improved instruction;
- Include strategies to promote effective parental involvement in the schools served by the LEA; and
- Include a determination of why the LEA's previous plan did not bring about increased student academic achievement.

The plan must also specify the fiscal responsibilities of the LEA and detail the required technical assistance that the SEA will provide.

7. What is the implementation timeline for the LEA improvement plan?

The LEA must implement its improvement plan, whether new or revised, expeditiously, but no later than the beginning of the school year immediately following the year in which the assessments were administered that resulted in the LEA's identification for improvement by the SEA. For example, if the LEA does not make AYP during the 2002-03 and 2003-04 school years, it will be identified for improvement and enter improvement status beginning with the 2004-05 school year, at which time it must implement its improvement plan.

8. What is the source of funding for the high-quality professional development required when the LEA is identified for improvement?

When an LEA is identified for improvement, it must reserve not less than 10 percent of its Title I Part A funds for high-quality professional development for instructional staff that is specifically designed to

improve classroom teaching. The LEA must continue to reserve and use these funds for this purpose during each fiscal year it is identified for improvement.

LEAs may include in this 10 percent total the Title I Part A funds that schools within the LEA reserve for professional development when they are in school improvement status. However, the LEA may not include in the total any part of the funds designated to help teachers who are not highly qualified become highly qualified.

9. Must the SEA provide technical assistance to an identified LEA?

Yes. If requested, the SEA must provide or arrange for the provision of technical or other assistance to the LEA identified for improvement.

10. In what areas should the SEA provide technical assistance?

The purposes of SEA technical assistance are to help the LEA (1) develop and implement its required plan; (2) work more effectively with its schools identified for improvement; and (3) address problems the LEA may have with implementing parental involvement measures and providing high-quality professional development. The technical assistance must apply effective methods and instructional strategies grounded in scientifically based research.

11. How does an LEA exit from improvement status?

If, after being identified for improvement, an LEA makes AYP for two consecutive years, the SEA need no longer identify the LEA for improvement. For example, if an LEA is in improvement status for the 2003-04 school year, but at the end of that year makes AYP and goes on to make AYP at the end of the 2004-05 school year, it will not be in improvement status during the 2005-06 school year.

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2. What data do SEAs and LEAs review?	1	6. What are examples of policies and practices with the greatest likelihood of ensuring that all groups of students achieve proficiency?	3
3. What is the timeline for the review of school progress?	1	7. Can a school identified for improvement implement a comprehensive school reform model as a part of its school improvement plan?	4
4. What entity must ensure that this timeline is met?	1	8. Why must the plan address professional development?	4
5. Should officials in individual schools examine the data that the SEA and LEA review?	1	9. What kinds of professional development should be provided?	4
6. How must the LEA share the results of a school's annual review?	1	10. Why must the school improvement plan contain provisions for teacher mentoring?	4
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS	2		
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT – YEAR ONE	2		
1. What purpose is served by identifying a school for improvement?	2	11. What is the source of funding for the professional development detailed in the school improvement plan?	4
2. May a school appeal the SEA's determination that the school has not made AYP for two consecutive years?	2	12. What is "high-quality" professional development?	4
3. When the LEA identifies a school for improvement, what information must it provide to parents?	2	13. How must the school improvement plan address parental involvement?	4
4. What information must the LEA provide to both parents and the public?	2	14. Why must a school improvement plan contain measurable goals?	4
5. What guideline should SEAs, LEAs or schools follow when communicating with parents and the public during the school improvement process?	2	15. If the school identified for improvement has an existing plan, must it create a new plan to meet the school improvement requirements?	5
6. What are the responsibilities of the LEA after a school is identified for improvement?	3	16. Who must be involved in developing the school improvement plan?	5
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN	3		
1. What must the school do when it is identified for improvement?	3	17. What is the review process for the school improvement plan?	5
2. What is the purpose of the school improvement plan?	3	18. Under what timeline must the LEA approve the school improvement plan?	5
3. What topics must the plan address?	3	19. May the LEA condition its approval of a school improvement plan?	5

20. According to what timeline must the school improvement plan be implemented?	5	LEA IMPROVEMENT	8
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT – TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	5	LEA IMPROVEMENT – YEARS ONE AND TWO	8
1. What is the LEA's responsibility for providing assistance to a school in improvement?	5	1. Which LEAs must an SEA identify for improvement?	8
2. In what areas must the LEA assist a school in improvement?	5	2. Is it possible for an LEA to be identified for improvement even if none of its schools are so identified?	8
3. What factors should the LEA take into account as it devises an assistance plan for a school in need of improvement?	6	3. What notification requirements apply if an SEA identified as LEA for improvement?	8
4. What responsibility does the LEA have to assist schools in need of improvement?	6	4. If the SEA identifies an LEA for improvement what actions must the LEA take?	8
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT – YEAR TWO	6	5. What is the purpose of the LEA improvement plan?	8
1. What causes a school to enter year two of school improvement status?	6	6. What components must the LEA improvement plan contain?	9
2. May an LEA delay implementing the second year of school improvement?	6	7. What is the implementation timeline for the LEA improvement plan?	9
3. Must the LEA continue to provide technical assistance during this delay?	7	8. What is the source of funding for the high-quality professional development required when the LEA is identified for improvement/	9
4. What notification requirements apply when a school enters its second year of school improvement?	7	9. Must the SEA provide technical assistance to an identified LEA?	9
5. What assistance is available to a school in its second year of improvement?	7	10. In what areas should the SEA provide technical assistance?	9
ANNUAL REVIEW OF LEA PROGRESS	7	11. How does an LEA exit from improvement status?	9
LEA REVIEW PROCESS	7		
1. Does the SEA review LEAs that do not receive Title I Part A funding?	7		
2. Should an LEA examine the data that the SEA reviews?	7		
3. If, after conducting its review, the SEA proposes to identify an LEA for improvement, must the LEA be given an opportunity to review the data?	7		
4. What notification requirements apply during the LEA review and after the results of the review are determined?	7		
5. If, after conducting its review, an SEA determines that an LEA has exceeded its annual AYP objectives for two consecutive years, may it reward the LEA?	7		